



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1003MI-1 for Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	1
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This proposal doesn't provide a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that build upon work in four core educational assurance areas. Neither does it articulate a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support.</p> <p>Rather the statement lists 3 activities that it seeks funds to develop that focus on training, prevention/intervention, and parent engagement, but it doesn't provide any information on how it intends to carry out these missions. The content is devoid of any detail and confines itself to explaining the role of the county office and providing citations from the literature.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	1
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While 9 school districts signed the application as LEA members, no descriptions of each are provided. The application doesn't establish individual needs related to early pre-K education (which is the purpose of this project), the accomplishments of these districts to date, and why they want to participate in the project. We're not told what each can bring to the project.</p> <p>The description of the selection process appears to be limited to saying that schools in the 9 participating districts will be eligible for inclusion if 70% of the teachers and principal agrees to participate. Additional criteria for participation is promised as one of the preliminary tasks after the project is funded.</p> <p>The tables of proficiency status and goals don't even include the names, or any data, regarding the individual schools that are being considered for inclusion. Not naming the schools that will be included is not disqualifying, since the words "if available" are used in (A)(2)(b).</p> <p>The total number of participating students during the first year is provided (3,250) but no information that describes the students or the benefits of the project to them, is provided. The lack of detailed criteria for inclusion; the lack of descriptions of the participating districts; and the lack of student data from the districts that are potential candidates for inclusion makes this response very weak.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	1
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>No plan for LEA level reform is presented in this section, which is only about 100 words long. General goals for the project are stated, but no strategies for trying to reach these goals, are presented. No logic model is presented. No rationale is presented for how the project will lead to meaningful reform. No information is included as to how the project will improve student learning outcomes. The response is limited to general statements that do not include supporting information that relates to the children that will benefit from this project, or how their schools will benefit.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	1
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section does not contain summative assessment data for each district (requirement a); it contains different data from each district for decreasing achievement gaps; and it only contains data on postsecondary degree attainment for some districts.</p>		

The tables in this section also incorrectly define the subgroups as entire school populations; data are not provided by gender, ethnicity, special education status, EL status, etc., as required by the application and which makes it impossible to determine the success each district has had in closing achievement gaps.

No support or rationale is provided for the goals that are stated.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	1
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Data are given for the Oral Reading Fluency subtest from DIBELS for 4 districts in Kalamazoo County, but these scores are not disaggregated by subgroups. Also nothing is said about how the other 5 districts that signed the application did on this type of measure.</p> <p>The same is true for some disciplinary statistics: they are only presented for some districts and the schools are never identified. Even the Michigan Dashboard data that could have been presented for each district in the consortia (as well as probably for each school with a K-3 population) was not presented or analyzed.</p> <p>The application's requirements for this section demands that "a clear record of success for the past four years" for the participating schools [or presumably for all the participating districts if schools haven't been selected] must be established. This has not been done.</p> <p>Also the response doesn't stipulate any "reforms in the persistently lowest-achieving schools" as required in part (b); and does not include an convincing evidence as to how parents will be informed of student participation, instruction, and services, as required in part (c).</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section opens with the statement that specific schools haven't been chosen and then goes on to say that Board adopted budgets have to be published within 30 days after adoption. However, the Board budgets for the participating districts are not summarized and nothing is said that assures they will be transparent down to the salary level data at individual schools. These data are not presented for the most recent year. Thus there is no documented evidence of transparency for the participating districts. The only budget data are presented is at the consortium level, for the RESA (the county agency) expenditures. Thus the budget data are only provided for the county agency that will manage the consortium, and not at the LEA level. No budget data for individual districts or schools are presented; included data that would show to what extent they will benefit from the project.</p> <p>No statements about how each of the participating districts will assure transparency has been provided.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section cites Michigan law as to the authority of an intermediate service unit. Therefore it meets the intent of this subsection since it is implicit that the local districts will also function under these state laws and regulations. While the application does not specify whether individual districts have the autonomy to implement individual learning environments, reading the legislation makes it appear that individual districts have the authority to do so.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	1
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

While 9 districts signed this application, nothing is said that describes "how students, families, teachers and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal."

No teachers organization name or signature appears on the cover page of the application, but there are such signatures for Presidents of some district teacher's organizations later in the proposal; but their authority does not go beyond the local district teacher's organization they represent. Such signatures do not appear for all nine districts, therefore it is unclear whether all teachers organizations have agreed to the terms of this application.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

This section discussed the good relationship between the ISU (intermediate service unit) and its districts, but it does not meet this section's demand for a high-quality plan that contains a detailed analysis of needs and gaps of the participating districts.

Since the application selection criteria stipulates that this be done for each LEA, this requirement has not been met.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	1
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application notes that Michigan is one of the Common Core states and that stakeholders were consulted in developing the pre-K and primary learning systems in Michigan, but again nothing is said about the consortium schools and districts and their individual roles or commitments to the project. The discussion of the Common Core Standards is one of the two major topics in this section.</p> <p>The other major section discusses inservice training, but no plans are made for it; nor any commitments obtained.</p> <p>No evidence is presented that leads the reader to believe that any of the considerations listed under part (b) will be addressed. Also no mechanisms are in place to support the students to track and manage their learning, as is required in part (c).</p> <p>This section does not include a high-quality plan for an approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners.</p> <p>Thus this is an extremely weak response and one that does not meet the requirements set forth in the application.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	1
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section focuses on the Kalamazoo County organization that assembled this application, but it doesn't discuss the structure, qualifications, strategies or conditions with which the project will deal. It doesn't describe in detail how personalized learning environments will be developed, the measures that will be used to track the outcomes of this preK-3 program as the students progress through the upper grade levels leading to college; the resources to which the participating educators already have access and how school and district leadership teams will be structured so as to help ensure success. No information was provided that meet's the application's requirements for a high-quality plan that embodies these features.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	1
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

A management structure for the grant is briefly discussed, but nothing is said about practices, policies and rules that relates to the the schools participating in this project. or how the central offices and consortium will be provided with the flexibility needed for this project to succeed. Nothing is said about the learning resources that are already available in these schools and the ones that will be provided under the grant. Nothing is said describing the actual LEA organizations (as opposed to the consortium organization), the organization of learning teams, or providing learning resources and instructional practices for students with disabilities and English learners.

Some activities are described at the global (county) level, but nothing is said that demonstrates that the applicant had any specific knowledge of these districts, students and schools, or the steps will be taken to empower parents (since the students may be too young for some of these activities) to play active and dynamic roles in their childreans' education.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)

10

1

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A set of principles for working with parents is presented, but nothing is said about the methods by which the project will ensure that all stakeholders have access to the necessary content, tools and other learning resources; ensuring that stakeholders have access to adequate technical support and IT systems; and ensuring that LEAs and schools will be able to use integrated information systems that include HR data, student information data, budget data and instructional management system data .

The activities that are involved are limited to a meeting with each family at the beginning of each year and "telephoning routinely with news about how their childrren are doing, not just when they are having problems." No content outlines are provided for these activities and information about how the parents will use informtion technology and data bases to increase their knowledge of their children is missing entirely.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>This section describes the State model for continuous improvement but the response in this section is generalized and the model only contains a few elements (gather data, analyze data, develop action plan, develop implementation plan) -- all these leading to student achievement.</p> <p>This is overly simplistic and no detailed supporting plans are suggested for how this will be done. Rather, a few bullet points of 10-25 words are used to describe the implementation methodology (e.g., "Annual report shared with all entities"). These bullet points describe intermediate objectives but do not include any information relating to methodology that describes how they will be implemented. Thus a sample or actual annual information plan is not provided, the manner in which plans will be shared with Leadership Teams and incorporated into schools' and districts' plans is not described; etc. No plan for implementing a system for rigorous improvement is provided; and thus this plan cannot be considered "high-quality".</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>This section does not include any details of how adjustments will be made in the plan. It describes WHAT will occur, but it doesn't describe HOW the desired corrections will be implemented.</p> <p>Thus it says the "ongoing communications, data analysis, action planning and correcting out implementation practices" will occur "at least three times a year"; but itdoesn't provide any details about the processes that will be used to bring about changes in the program.</p>		

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section provides a general description of the performance measures that will be used but the data are only presented for the districts as a whole. They are not disaggregated by school which is a weakness in the proposal; and they are not disaggregated gender, ethnicity, special education or EL status, etc. While 3 standardized assessment tools are mentioned by name (IIGDI, DIBEL and a Kindergarten Readiness Screener), nothing is said about how each are used, and what actions will be taken if very high or low performance scores are generated.</p> <p>Later in the proposal, other performance measure tables are provided, but the "subgroup" on these tables are districts, rather than student characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, EL status, etc.; and even these tables are inconsistent across districts. No school data (even for the universe of schools) are provided. No data appears to have been provided for all 9 participating districts.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Only a single 100 word paragraph as been devoted to this response. It describes the quarterly review process, but it does not address -- except in the most general terms -- what will be covered in these meetings, how inconsistencies, funding issues and conflicts between districts will be resolved. It mentions that some of these situations will arise, but it says little about how to resolve them.</p> <p>Very little has been said about how individual students, parents or even schools will be affected by the activities funded by this grant application; or about how the project's effectiveness will be assessed over time. The application focuses on the activities of the County agency that is submitting the proposal, rather than on the project's effects on the students, parents and schools that will be the ultimate beneficiaries of this project; and no evaluation plan is presented that focuses on student, parent and school outcomes for the project that go beyond increases in test scores. Further, baseline data for test scores is insufficient since it is not presented for individual schools, or for high-need students within those districts.</p> <p>Little is said about how this project will be evaluated, how technology will be employed, or how changes will be introduced in the project that will make it more cost-effective and productive.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	1
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget is written from the perspective of the County agency that is submitting the application. No district or school level budgets are provided. Since the ultimate beneficiaries of this project are schools and students, no data are provided that support the linkage between costs and outcomes for this project. The data are insufficient to make any studied analyses of this budget.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Sustainability of this project will be largely based on the commitment levels of the participating schools and districts after this project ends. No information or strategies are presented to ensure that this takes place. Also, no information is provided support for the project's activities for the 3 years after the project ends.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	3
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:		

The only information (evidence) regarding the district partnership are the the signatures of the district officials, some letters from some (not all) districts voicing support for the project, and some district-wide data that relate the districts.

With these exceptions, a major problem with this application is that it says practically nothing about how the partnership will function day-to-day, and the roles of the individual districts, schools, teacher and parent organizations in supporting the project. There are no descriptions of the participating districts and their schools that includes information about the challenges they are facing; how they have been trying to meet these challenges; and the unique strengths they will bring to this effort.

This application appears to embody a "top-down" model, with the County organization at the apex and the districts being the County's clients. Thus this does not appear to be a joint partnership with mutual prerogatives and responsibilities. This appears to be counter to the intent of this priority which involves creating true partnerships among districts, intermediate service agencies and State departments of education.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Little has been said in this application to assure that it will result in personalized learning environments. In fact the application is written nearly entirely from the perspective of the county agency; and data and anecdotal information relating to the needs of individual districts and schools vis a vis personalized learning environment is missing. In short, this application embodies a "trickle down" philosophy that suggests that if we give support to the county intermediate service unit, the benefits will automatically trickle down districts, students and parents about whom the application has said very little.

Total	210	36
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	12

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Budget Supplement One - Improve Kalamazoo RESA Information Systems

The optional activity is designed to refine and extend the RESA's information systems by extending the commercial systems that presently own and moving to standards-based electronic report cards. Extending a commercial system is often more cost-effective than building a system "from scratch" and also will lead to savings in staff training since many of the staff will be already familiar with the parent system.

However no buy-in from the affected districts is shown, and there is not a commitment from them to use the tools that are developed. Thus while this response is scored in the "high" range, it was not awarded all the available points because school district buy-in was not described. The rationale for this supplemental budget is very strong and it presumably would be able to be used eventually across all the County's districts. The budget is reasonable and appropriate.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	8
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Budget Supplement 2 - Expand the Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program

This activity involves an expansion of the existing Parents as Teachers (PAT) existing program. This is an evidence-based home visitation model that is aimed at smoothing children's' transition from home to school. The goal is to extend the program so that it will be capable of serving all households with 3-4 year olds whose parents wish to participate in the project. A strong vision and rationale for the project is given, and all parents would receive monthly home visits. Since the program will be county-wide it will extend to all school districts, but nothing is said about how the extension will be co-developed and implemented in the participating districts. Nothing is said also about how the plan will be modified to better serve the different population groups in each of the participating school districts. No information is provided that helps the reviewer determine whether the budget is reasonable or excessive.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1003MI-2 for Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

fragmented and limited reform vision

unclear Multi-Tiered Support System in reading and behavior, prevention and early intervention; coaching, continue increasing teacher curriculum skills for CCSS; content focus reading, behavior

low build on core assurance areas:

- since recent 2010 adoption of CCSS providing training, coaching, and technical assistance to teachers and principals in curriculum
- mentions last six years development of data systems; mentioned goal to measure at every system level; however did not mention student growth to inform teaching
- mention KRESA PD, new annual teacher and principal evaluation system with student growth as significant factor (no percentage) and pilot in 2013-14;
- does not mention 4th core assurance for turning around lowest-achieving schools

low-limited goals state Absolute Priority-4 with 3-broad goals

unclear connection for scale-up stated for grades 4-12 in last two years of grant

indicates need: only 54% students enter kindergarten with pre-skills to become successful; 1,800 students in poverty, Head Start, GSRP, KCR4 programs not serving about 300 students

presented in A-4: Strong chart of year-1 chart of goals, objectives and deliverables to improve effective teaching curriculum Qtr-2; effective principal oversight instruction and evaluation Q-1; training coaches Q-4, teacher-based school-family partnership-Q3 ; however, unrealistic time for consultant curriculum and institute developments, that result in delayed actual trainings and implementation for teachers, principals, and coaches in year-1

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identified consortium with and currently 9 districts participating with signed MOU for potential higher impact across the county school selection process using 70% teacher and principal consensus and commitments may limit desired participations list of schools not available; up to 13 schools to be identified in first 100 days of grant unclear but completed chart with participating Districts with total number of projected (?) participating students and educators, and students and low-income population confusing limited support for low-income; current overall 2,260 low-income students/6,541 participating students=34.6% low-income; half of the districts with less than 40% low-income families did not indicate participating students who are high-need populations within each district beyond low-income, such as ELL, minority, special-ed 		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> limited narrative describing vague plan for reform proposal scale-up beyond participating schools limited narrative to support broad district and school level team approach limited narrative broadly mentioned teacher capacity building and data-based decision-making credible statement to train teachers to identify and use high-yield, research-based instructional practices limited narrative broadly indicated focus on reading, math and social-emotional behaviors limited narrative support for appropriate effective evaluation training for principals and superintendents 		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strong chart of year-1 chart of goals, objectives and deliverables to improve effective teaching curriculum Qtr-2; effective principal oversight instruction and evaluation Q-1; training coaches Q-4, teacher-based school-family partnership-Q3 ; however, realistic timer for consultant curriculum and institute developments, but result in delayed actual trainings for teachers, principals, and coaches in year-1; mentions goals that will exceed State ESEA targets; (this chart may have been misplaced here)</p> <p>Based on performance summative assessments data charted for 3rd grade reading and math baseline 2010-2011 and targets, for overall, each district, and subgroups, factor that a number of district performance went down in 2010-11:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> unrealistic almost 10% increase for subgroups across grant years; especially yr-1 with delayed curriculum and trainings unrealistic targets for lowest-achieving districts like Comstock and Kalamazoo; especially with yr-1 delayed curriculum and trainings <p>Based on decreasing achievement gaps data charted for Elementary School reading and math, baseline, 4yr-grant and 1-yr-post grant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> unclear what Elementary School reading and math for a building, i.e. what grade levels? scale up for grades 4-12 mentioned; thus, may not influence targets beyond 3rd grade limited with no subgroups listed; used avg 30% high and low scores difference unrealistic stated 10% decrease in achievement gaps; also may be limited by delayed curriculum and teacher trainings in Yr-1 unrealistic for districts with highest gaps such as Parchment <p>Based on graduation rates presented for baseline, 4-yr grant and 1-yr post grant, and targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> confusing connection to proposal for targets in grant years; with no scale-up indicated for 4-12th grade-levels in last two years of grant lacks ambitious, in slow-paced low-income and minority targets to 80% over 5 years Kalamazoo promise for free MI college tuition should be working more to influence low-graduation rates in half the districts 		

Based on college enrollment rates presented for baseline, 4-yr grant, 1-yr post grant, and targets for districts:

- lacks overall rates
- lacks subgroup rates
- ambitious but may be unrealistic for lowest-schools in baseline year, without support from proposal until last two years of grant
- unclear why Kalamazoo promise for free MI college tuition not working in lowest schools?

Limited mention that targets exceed state ESEA targets

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	9
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Limited presentation to extent each LEA demonstrated clear record of success in past four year in advancing student learning and teaching, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided charted data that indicate limited 4-year record of success for increased student learning outcomes, including special education, low-income and minorities, by oral reading fluency from high to low risk categories, and decreased behavior referrals for four districts with over 50% low-income. • Does not indicate record of success for closing achievement gaps, high school graduation rates, or college enrollment • Described work with two high priority middle schools received school improvement grants, including training in behavior and school improvement, assistance writing actionable plans, monitoring input, and quarterly reports of progress. • Specified State of MI, districts are required to present dashboard or reported card for management of finances that includes student performance data such as Michigan Educational Assessment Program scores. Appropriate example of district website snapshot that would be available to public. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	0
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not indicate school-level information made available • MI dept of Ed transparency requires district-level or intermediate-district-level made available to the public 		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	4
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Confictive state context for implementation by:</p> <p>Did not specify each LEA conditions and autonomy under state legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements. Proposal lacks personalized learning environments.</p> <p>Kalamazoo RESA stated classified as an intermediate school district in MI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented laws verbiage specifying rights, powers, duties for intermediate school district and their school board. The laws reflect conditions and autonomy authorized under State laws to implement the project at the regional/county level. Proposal lacks personalized learning environments. 		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	3
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a) Did not indicate how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating school were engaged in development of the</p>		

proposal, or how the proposal was revised based on their feedback.

- Used prior community meeting as proxy for feedback used in developing RTTD proposal.
- Weak teacher and parent level support represented through signed LEA MOUs; and school selection process limited by 70% teacher and principal consensus support.

b) Limited letters of support from parents and teachers at the LEA and school-level.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

- stated logic model designed to address capacity building and data-based decision-making at the building and district levels
- stated KRESA administrative role in providing state funded preschool for the county and current support for KRESA pending application to administer county Head Start, has capacity to assess current status for implementing personalized learning environment for PK-3 students.
- indicated need to ensure students are prepared for each subsequent grade and remain on path for college and career readiness
- indicated well positioned to provide leadership in implementation of all goals and objectives in proposal
- limited analysis process
- does not identify specifics by needs and gaps that the plan will address

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	9

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Overall, plan does not adequately address personalizing the learning environment to improve teaching and learning:

- Lack of information from districts
- Limited assessments for ongoing and regular feedback
- Limited structures for student data-based decision-making across PK-3 math
- Limited Increased exposure and trainings to IES online resources to increase highly effective teachers and principals
- Innovative iPads with Audio books to support preschool standards and parent engagement
- Ambitious summer home visiting program for at-risk preschool students
- Limited explore career options specificity at later grade levels

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	9
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Limited to improve teaching and learning through personalized learning by:

- supports ideals, rather than strategies and practices on individual skills and organization capacity to manage and support change at LEA, school
- training goals for teachers and principals in curriculum to achieve Common Core Standards
- limited student assessments with matching tools and resources to meet personalized student needs across grade levels or to close achievement gaps
- innovative iPads for preschool students and parent engagement
- limited tools, data and resources for teacher leadership teams across grade levels
- lacks specificity to increase effective teachers and principals for hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas

Recognizes developmental project implementation based on National Implementation Research Network guides

Lacks formal teacher and principal evaluation systems until 2014-15, pending Michigan state dept of education evaluation systems.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	4
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Lacks credible plan with specificity for LEA practices, policies and rules to facilitate personalized learning by statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators are the kinds of issues that are discussed and determined at the level of the district leadership team." <p>Lacks cspecificity for organizing the LEA central offices; primarily focused on expansion of KRESA regional/county level structure.</p> <p>Limited existing school leadership team flexibility and autonomy over schedules, calendars, personnel and staffing models, etc.</p> <p>Limited support for student opportunities to progress and demonstrate mastery of standards through single Work Sampling Plan.</p> <p>Specified online learning resources and instructional practices adaptable and accessible for all students, without specificity for students with disabilities and English learners; iPads learning resource limited to preschool, excludes K-3 or other grade-levels.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	2
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Unknown policies and infrastructure at LEA district, school, and classroom levels to support personalized learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited support for all student access to typical classroom instruction, classroom libraries, and online learning resources. iPads project limited to preschool for both in and out of school. <p>Specified that KRESA county-level will provide technical training and support for educators and parents, as well as 3 FTE Technology Support staff.</p> <p>Unclear exporting data in open data format available for parents and students in LEAs.</p> <p>Unclear status of interoperable data systems in the LEAS and schools.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	9
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strategy delineated to incorporate work of project into existing school improvement structures, and embedding new practices; however, less specificity for sustainability after the grant by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using existing state Michigan's four-stage Model for Continuous School Improvement to obtain feedback and make corrections and improvements 		

- Supports shared plan development across various team levels for review and feedback, Project management monthly implementation progress reviews, county-wide Curriculum and Supt. Council reports, and Executive Director of Project will communicate project information and marketing.
- Specified stakeholder group representing school boards, business community, parents, teachers, and other relevant parties will be established and quarterly meetings are scheduled to provide progress reports related to implementation, student achievement and seek input and feedback.
- Lacks specificity to publicly share information about quality investments, with proposal solely funded by RTTD, such as professional development, technology, and staff.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strong strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders:

- A stakeholder group representing school boards, business community, parents, teachers, and other relevant parties is established and quarterly meetings are scheduled to provide progress reports related to implementation, student achievement and seek input and feedback.
- At least 3 times a year, internal stakeholders continuous improvement model: develop ongoing communication, data analysis, action planning, and correcting implementation
- At preschool level, share progress with Great Share Collaborative and community forums 3 times a year
- Prepare reports for districts 3 times a year to share with their boards of information
- Presenting information to state and professional organizations, other ISDs and districts

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strong literacy and social-emotional measures and targets for PK-3 including:

- Work Sampling Plan for PreK-3 academic 3 times/year; Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs), and Behavior (Student Risk Scale) 3 times/year for social-emotional.
- DIBELS Next for K-3, 3 times/year,
- Unspecified math progress measure for PK-3
- Specified number and percentages for highly effective and effective teacher and principal for baseline participating and targets for grant years.
- K-3 behavior referrals
- state Michigan Educational Assessment Program/Reading baseline and targets
- MEAP/math for 3rd grade targets for math for all participating students in last two grant years may be unrealistic

Does not specify performance measures for grade levels 4-12.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strong specified quarterly review process by Project Leadership Team:

- review budget expenditures
- indicators related to training and coaching
- fidelity tools and self-assessments for teams and individuals
- analyze school and district student achievement indicators
- problem solve and action plan around systemic issues (i.e schedules, service delivery models, structures)
- review building and grade-level use of resources

- limited specified review of strategies like use of new technology (iPads)

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Detailed budget indicated RTTD as sole funding to support project.</p> <p>Budget reflects primary use of funding at the KRESA regional/county office and staff, and pre-K grade level; rather than LEA, school, and classroom levels, and other K-3 grade levels.</p> <p>Described RTTD sole funding to support implementation of the proposal.</p> <p>While budget does identify one-time versus ongoing costs during the grant, unclear after the grant, and it does not reflect focus on strategies that will ensure long-term sustainability of personalized learning environments.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-sustainability through capacity building and systems supports developed in RTTD project • Limited sustainability in review current resource allocation such as Title II dollars, and inefficiency reallocations • Potential sustainability through expected Michigan state dept of education initiatives 		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Overall application does not coherently and comprehensively indicate LEA or school-level building on core education</p>		

assurance areas.

Overall application does not coherently and comprehensively support personalized learning environments to significantly improve student learning and teaching.

Low quality plan did not indicate, at the LEA, school or teacher levels, sufficient supports, strategies and tools to significantly improve effective preK-3 teaching, or create personalized learning in preK-3 education levels.

Unclear multi-tiered support system model as foundation to address needs of each student, decrease achievement gaps across subgroups, or expand effective teachers at the LEA or school-levels.

Personalized learning and fidelity of project implementation across districts, schools, and teachers, may be adversely impacted without optional budget-1 funding for Ed-Fi data system designed to provide adequate student-level instructional, assessment and reporting for preK-3 levels. Further that budget may be inadequate to cover unexpected costs that are typical in development and customized deliverables in these type data systems.

Total	210	90
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	11

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

(1) Rationale for data system development may address integrated student data services for PK-3:

- Ed-Fi data warehouse/data interchange/repository education solution system developed by Dell Foundation.
- Pinnacle Instruction system for data collection and assessment by standards for both formative and summative assessments
- computer-based report cards

(2) Quality plan by Kalamazoo KRESA

- to implement in RTTD consortium with 8 LEAs, and may be available in future to all districts in Kalamazoo County.
- extensive detailed timeline and activities for implementation
- supports expanded usage and applications
- unclear cost coverage for beyond grant or to cover unexpected costs, typically associated with these high-cost systems

(3) Budget \$1, 812,208.35:

- detailed with goals, key activities, timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties
- will support initial development and implementation cost
- limited cost coverage beyond grant; perhaps covered with expansion fees to other districts in county and other 4 counties in Regional Data Initiatives Grant Consortium
- unclear cost coverage for unexpected costs, typically associated with these significant data systems; may need to increase budget to \$2 million
- may be unreasonable cost for student data warehouse and Pinnacle, designed to serve about 1,800 pre-K students
- if not funded, limits project to existing variable data systems in districts, without Pinnacle Instruction and Grade systems for PreK-3; thus may adversely impact ability to achieve fidelity of project implementation and personalized learning in Absolute Priority -1.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	9
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

(1) Ambitious parent educational development and outreach to families:

- unclear what age level students will be served
- confusing Parents as Teachers program to develop parents with at-risk 3-5 year olds , trained and certified PAT home educators
- rationale may be limited by stigma of home visitors; no evaluation results for prior PAT

(2) Limited plan

- lacks co-development
- indicated implementation planned across nine LEAs participating in the RTTD

(3) Adequate, maybe excessive, budget

- may be excessive RTTD \$1.685m plus \$1.076m to support home visits to each family referral per month, est. 1,244 families across the county
- detailed budget with overall, and project-level, itemized costs
- using electronic tablets for home visit to improve data collection
- strong additional funding \$1.076 million from nine LEAs, and two foundations
- limited national model



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1003MI-3 for Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Kalamazoo RESA's (KRESA) consortium application (with local school districts in the county) provides a convincing argument through research citations that early childhood education programs are a cost effective way to promote college and career readiness and a stronger k-12 program that recognizes the value of personalized learning environments. The KRESA vision articulates three goals for thir plan to improve preK-3 education and by extension learning in higher grades across the districts in the region. The first goal involves implementing a model of leading, training, coaching and technical assistance that will help local educators strengthen their preschool and primary grades instruction as a way to strengthen student outcomes. This goal includes three objectives that target programs for principals, teachers, and instructional coaches. This goal, with its articulated model, is convincing. The second goal addresses the development of prevention and early intervention by putting a series of four different teams on the problem: a RESA leadership team, district leadership and implementation teams, building leadership teams, and grade level teams. These four teams, as a human resource approach to reform, are an important addition to the vision. The third goal promotes a parent engagement and support model focused on digital technology with three objectives: parent representation on school leadership teams, embedding data-focused policies and practices in regular school routines, and development of a multi-tiered model of support. This final goal, with its clearly spelled out objectives, nicely rounds out this College Pathways PreK-3 vision.

The application provides details of timelines, deliverables and responsible parties for each of these three goals. That careful breakdown of activities in Table 1 of the text convinces this reader that the vision is more than just words -- that there are concrete actions associated with those words. The application also makes reference to the absolute priority of personalized learning environments several times in this section of the text.

This overall response to the criterion was comprehensive, producing a maximum score.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Kalamazoo RESA application has yet to identify specific districts and schools that will be joining this initiative although the expectation is that most of the districts in the KRESA region will participate (all 9 have signed MoUs). There are clearly specified guidelines calling for 70% of a given school's teachers as well as the principal agreeing to participate. This is a reasonable and appropriate guideline. The expectation is that 70% of all schools and their associated preschools in the selected districts will participate. There is also a detailed accounting of the number of students in the nine districts that are eligible for participation. A total of 3250 students are expected to be served in the first year with that number doubling by the second year. The answers in this section are responsive to the criterion, but the proposal would have been strengthened if the organizational arrangements for working with the nine districts had been finalized prior to the writing of the proposal. This response was given a score in the high end of the range of 8.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant, in response to this criterion, spells out a model of improvement based on capacity building and data-based decision-making. It will revolve around the training of both leaders and teachers regarding best instructional practices. For leaders the focus will be on better use of data from evaluation systems to monitor progress of the teachers in adopting those practices. For teachers it will be on the adoption of high yield research-based practices. Both will be involved in learning about organizational supports for high quality instruction, data-based decision-making, leadership, coaching, and training of others. These individual role foci for training, as well as the combined focus, are reasonable targets for promoting meaningful reform. The overarching framework (i.e., the need for more capacity building and better decision-making) is soundly based in the academic literature. However, the lack of details for how the applicant will put these into place across the districts, makes it difficult for this reviewer to make the important logical connection between what will happen with adoption of the model and the eventual impact of those actions on student outcomes. Because those connections are unclear, this plan was given a middle range score of 6.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This RTT-D applicant has outlined an ambitious yet achievable set of outcome data for third grade reading and math (both for proficiency levels and growth levels). This is evidenced by the proposed changes in achievement proficiency from averages across the schools in the mid 60s to the low 80s, and growth scores (as measured with z-scores) of nearly .5. The one exception might be what looks like an overly optimistic goal of nearly doubling math scores from 37% proficiency to 73% proficiency in four years.

The proposal also has an achievement gap reduction plan. This is a measure of the difference between the highest 30% of scores and lowest 30% of scores. The grant criteria call for comparisons between subgroups. This gap analysis in this section is for the entire population. The projected reductions are difficult to follow and thus hard to interpret.

The plan also calls for improvements in high school graduation rates and college enrollments. The projected goals are impressive with both high school graduation rates and college attendance moving from approximately the 60% rate (as a rough average across the nine districts) to closer to 80%. However, it is puzzling as to how these numbers might be attributed to the program since the participants (k-3 students) are 10 years away from graduation and college enrollment.

This response is rated in the mid-range with a score of 5.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score

(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The criteria for this section asks for evidence of reform activity in three areas. Thus, the evaluation of the plan will involve distributing points across each of these on a five point scale (i.e., weighting each equally), to arrive at potential aggregate score of 15.</p> <p>(a) The standard for assessing the response to this criterion is data to be provided from each participating LEA for student learning and achievement, as well as closing the achievement gap. Graduation and college enrollment requirements are not relevant for this population since the target population is preK-3. The intent is to look at general trends of achievement in the past four years. It is understandable that with a shift in measurements more current oral reading fluency data are not available for the nine potential participating districts. But the criterion did not ask for data from just the districts engaged in reforms with KRESA. On the other hand, the data that was provided, offered compelling evidence of the capacity of four districts (it is unclear whether these four are a subset of the nine partners in this consortium) to use reform for improvement in student achievement and discipline. The ability to close gaps for special education, low income, and racial minority students was equally impressive from the data presented across the four reporting districts. Because these data only tell a partial story (four districts engaged in specific reforms with KRESA) the score on this criterion was only a 2 in the mid-range.</p> <p>(b) The standard for assessing the response for this criterion involves showing evidence of a track record of success across all participating LEAs with low-performing schools. The applicant did not report whether any of the nine potential partners had elementary schools (the focus of this initiative is PreK-3) that qualified as persistently low achieving. The data presented in the application only reports progress from two middle schools in one district, Kalamazoo. The data presented for those two middle schools did not include any longitudinal numerical indicators. Furthermore, the data presented are about putting into place more effective organizational processes. Those are acceptable outcomes, but no evidence is offered to link those changed processes to improvements in the learning environment, which is the focus of this grant application. This criterion was given a score of 1 in the low-range.</p> <p>(c) The KRESA application presents an example of data made available to the community from the state data dashboard or report card. There is clear evidence to suggest that data is provided on an annual basis and in a clearly readable format to help students, educators and parents make informed decisions about school and district operations. This answered warranted a maximum score of 5.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	0
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The KRESA response to this criterion appears to be nonresponsive. The criterion calls for school-level data, not district data. The application does not include even a sample district data display. Furthermore, financial data are outlined for KRESA budgeting categories (no actual data are displayed) when the criterion calls for data from all the participating LEAs. This was scored 0.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	0
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This criterion asks the applicant to provide data on the extent to which "each LEA" has successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning environments. The KRESA answer is nonresponsive because it only details the capacity of it's organization and board under current state statute. The data provided was extensive, but no data were provided for the the participating LEAs. Also, no mention of how the KRESA powers would have an impact on personalized learning environments appeared in the text. Thus, a score of 0 was assigned.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The KRESA response to this criterion provides a clear and compelling case that a wide range of constituents were engaged in input about the supports needed to improve prek-3 education in Kalamazoo County. This is partly a function of the mission of the KRESA as a regional educational service provider -- the application makes that case that it makes a habit of routinely seeking cooperation across a range of agencies and constituent groups. But in addition to doing that a part of its regular operations, KRESA was also active in two community goal setting activities documented in detail within the plan. While these community goal setting events were not specifically designed for input about this application, they provided a general forum and data from which the KRESA was able to assemble a plan that was driven not just by skills and talents of agency staff, but</p>		

also interests and needs of the broader community. The staff at the KRESA also sought professional educators' views on the specifics of a RTT-D application through a series of monthly meetings. Finally, the application also offers 14 letters of support for this initiative from community agencies, parent/neighborhood groups, professional associations, and district superintendents. With nine potential participating districts (those who signed MoUs at the beginning of the application), it is surprising that not more letters of support were garnered from both the districts and corresponding parent and community organizations.

Based on the collective evidence for this criterion, the applicant was assigned the score in the high range of 8 points.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	0
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

This criterion asks for documentation from each LEA for how they are currently managing implementation of personalized learning environments, including how needs and gaps might be incorporated into the plan. The KRESA response is not responsive because it only documents its own efforts in the past and what it hopes to do with this plan. A score of 0 was assigned to this section.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	6

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The KRESA application makes the case for Common Core State Standards as a key organizing principle for student learning. The proposal goes on to suggest that CCSS are nothing but empty vessels if they are not accompanied by effectively instructional strategies, formative and summative assessments, and structures of using student assessment data in a timely way. This section of the plan then goes on to list a range of resources that will be included in training to local educators. These include: Institute for Educational Services Practice Guides, online resources supporting the Practice Guides, Classroom Instruction That Works (Marzano resources), Visible Learning for Teachers (Hattie resources), training and coaching support for for setting lesson goals and student goal setting, effective instructional routines, as well as a package of resources for teachers who have students with particular challenges (e.g., training on how to distinguish between students needing more practice vs. more instruction, reteaching strategies, summer home visiting programs, and a variety of ways to more effectively engage students). The proposal also calls for student training in career interests and career options, plus supplying associated reading resources, as well as training on self monitoring skills. It is unclear whether KRESA will train students directly or train teachers to train students. Finally, the plan also calls for some parent training, particularly focused on better understanding preschool outcomes and expectations for kindergarten readiness. These all make sense as reasonable activities but the proposal fails to put these activities into any larger framework. The most obvious missing link was the lack of connection of these disparate activities to the criteria called for in the application. So, for example one part of the application calls for respondents to organize the learning section around what students need: (1) understanding how what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals, (b) tying learning and development goals to college- and career ready standards, (3) involvement in deep learning experiences, (4) have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives, and (5) master critical academic content and develop skills such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity and problem-solving.

A few of those five criteria described above were addressed directly (e.g. students connecting their learning to future adult success - #1) but others could only be guessed at regarding whether they were part of the resources being used (e.g. Marzano undoubtedly talks about critical thinking - #5). In addition, no mention was made of personalizing learning environments - the absolute priority of this initiative. Due to this, the score for this criterion only received points in the low end of the middle range -- 6 points.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant lays out a compelling rationale for how to approach the teaching and leading of the innovations being proposed in this project. the rational, paraphrased, makes the point that innovations often fail not because the ideas behind them are unsound but rather they fail because of faulty implementation. In response to that dilemma, the applicant will use guidelines from the National Implementation Research Network to guide their efforts to ensure fidelity in implementation. This is a constructive approach to ensure implementation. KRESA proposed to focus on two broad approaches to implementation:

(1) the skills needed by individuals in the LEAs, and (2) the organizational capacity of the local districts to manage the changes proposed by the work proposed in this application. The latter refers to the organizational structure to support the new practices.

The plan calls for a five step process. The first is the categorizing with teachers of the kinds of practices they use or might use in their classrooms as either (1) standard practice (done as part of the regular instructional routine), (2) emerging practice (trying out new ways of working), or (3) scalable (new techniques that are worth making sure that everyone does). Second, they will work on team structures, functions, roles, and do an assessment of the current reality in each school. Presumably the "teams" refer to collections of teachers in each school. Third, the process will involve analyzing the district capacity to put the innovations in place. Fourth, the teams will be exposed to the six stages of implementation -- from exploration to sustainability. Finally, the plan calls for developing the kinds of leadership that will be needed in each school to put these new innovative practices into place. The plan also calls for beginning the leadership training with development of evaluation skills. This six step process is both comprehensive and convincing to this reviewer.

The five step outline of this approach is a reasonable starting point, but there is no detail providing a reader with an understanding of what will actually happen when changing the behavior of teachers and leaders. For example, the leadership component only refers to one aspect - developing evaluation skills. Thus, it is difficult to judge whether the leadership component will be sufficient to really lead the change expected in consortia schools. But more importantly the plan fails to offer details as outlined by several of the criteria. For example, one criterion calls for a plan regarding how the applicant will increase the number of students who will receive instruction from the highly effective teachers who have received this additional training. No such plan was described. In addition, the approach does not use any language tied to personalized learning environments - the absolute priority of this grant.

Thus, this section of the plan is given a medium score of 10.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: This criterion asks for responses across five sub-criteria. Each one is evaluated separately: (a) The KRESA application provides a complete and reasonable governance structure for the work of this consortium with a flowchart diagram linking roles and responsibilities across the various partner teams. (b) The KRESA will work with already existing school leadership and grade level teams at each building. No discussion was offered about the flexibility and autonomy that these teams have over important improvement factors. (c) The Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework being employed by this consortium puts the necessary structures and processes in place for students to progress based on mastery. (d) The same MTSS framework allows multiple assessments during the course of the year but the application is silent about whether there are multiple ways of assessment. (e) The applicant did not mention whether learning resources and instructional practices would be adaptable and fully accessible to all students. Nor did the plan make reference to the absolute priority - personalized learning environments. Consequently, this section was scored in the middle range with a 10.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: The first two sub-criteria ask that the application address the issue of access by all stakeholders to: (1) content, tools and learning resources, and (2) appropriate levels of technical support. The KRESA response makes a convincing case for the need to provide access to materials and technical support to parents and that they have mechanisms in place to reach out to them. The application is silent about access and provision of materials/support for other stakeholders. Nor does the applicant mention how they will link any outreach with parents to the concept of personalized learning environments. The last two sub-criteria in this section refer to electronic access to data, specifically the availability of an open data format		

and interoperable data systems. The KRESA response makes clear that the students and families will have iPads as part of this project so accessibility to hardware is clear. But the application remains silent about whether the information will be in an open data format and whether it will involve interoperable data systems. So, the plan does not directly address these two sub-criteria.

The KRESA response only partially addressed the four criteria so this section was awarded a low middle range score of 3.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>KRESA has extensive experience in helping local school districts use a state-approved four stage Continuous School Improvement model (MI-CSI). This model is described in detail in the plan. This MI-CSI approach, which KRESA shows ample evidence of having both the skills and experience to use with its partner districts, directly and completely addresses the criterion of creating a "rigorous continuous improvement process." The KRESA application even extends this continuous improvement process model by suggesting that any process that attempts to make organizational improvements is contingent on four key factors: (1) choosing appropriate research-based instructional strategies, (2) having detailed action plans with clear expectations for all parties, (3) a motivated staff with the skills to monitor progress data and make decisions, and (4) feedback and feed-forward structures to guide next steps. The KRESA response also includes a comprehensive seven-step plan, which includes development of annual action plans for each strategy outlined in this proposal, sharing of the plan with leadership teams, reviewing progress monthly, sharing of curriculum council reports (a county-wide group) quarterly, sharing of superintendents council reports (a county-wide group) quarterly, inclusive planning regarding what they have learned, and annual reports shared with all participants. These steps are comprehensive and directly address the criterion for this section. The criterion also calls for implementing an improvement process both during and after the grant. KRESA suggests that post-grant success is contingent on embedding new practices in existing structures, but no specific plans are described for continuous improvement planning after the grant. With all but this final point the continuous improvement process outlined in this proposal is clear and convincing. This section was scored in the high range with a score of 13.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan outlines detailed actions for both internal and external stakeholder communication. For internal stakeholders a key communication tool is the set of data review activities. These will be done three times a year at the district, school and classroom levels. A solid set of questions are posed so that stakeholders know not only what has been documented but what followup steps might be taken after the review is completed. Both of those strategies appear to be productive ways to reach out to educators. At the external stakeholder level three activities were proposed: (1) community forums three times a year, (2) reports to local boards three times a year, and (3) the KRESA staff sharing what they have learned from their work to larger audiences at professional meetings and conferences. Again, these three steps make sense as a way to keep external stakeholders in the loop of communication about the progress of this grant initiative.</p> <p>This section of the plan was given maximum points - 5.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The KRESA plan calls for six categories of measures and associated goals to be used with this young age population: (1) overall school climate (K-3) - a 10% increase in positive responses each year, (2) Work Sampling System (preK 3x/year - 12% increase the first year after baseline measures and 15% the last two years), (3) Student Risk Screening Scale (preK-3 at least 3x/year) -growth targets for this measurement are not applicable, (4) DIBELS Next (a literacy fluency test for k-3 3x/yr - an increase from approximately 80% at benchmark to 95%), (5) MEAP achievement tests in reading - an increase from approximately 70% proficient to nearly 100% proficient, and (6) and a diagnostic test for special needs students on an as needed basis.</p> <p>The plan includes complete tables with ambitious yet achievable performance goals each of the 9 participating LEAs. These appear ambitious as significant improvements are set for each year of the plan and they include a reasonably broad spectrum of academic and non-academic indicators. The data presented by the applicant comprehensively addressed the criterion for</p>		

"overall" goals across all nine potential consortium participants, but no breakdowns were offered by subgroups.

The plan identifies fewer than 12 to 14 indicators but that is reasonable given the grade span of the population (preK-3).

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This RTT-D plan calls for a quarterly review process with each participating school. The review will include budget expenditures, consumer satisfaction surveys (i.e., how well teachers liked training sessions), pre-post test information, fidelity tools (checking on the quality of implementation), and self-assessments of progress. The strength of this plan is that not only will they implement this review process but that they will also provide training for participants on how to use the resulting evaluation data to problem solve and create action plans at both the district and school levels. This plan received maximum points - 5.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This criterion asks for the grant applicant to respond to three sub-criteria. First, the application should provide clear identification of all the funds to support the project. The KRESA presentation does an excellent job of that with clear and easy to follow breakdowns for each of the expenditures. As a broad brush, the plan includes approximately two-thirds of the budget for personnel (including benefits), just over 20% for supplies with the biggest subcategories of iPads and data plans to support them, and just under 10% for a "contractual" category. The expenditures within these categories all seem very reasonable. Second, the application should make a case for the expenditures being reasonable and sufficient. There is no text to provide that kind of argument, but the explanatory notes accompanying most of the line expenditures make it clear that they are reasonable and sufficient. For example, the majority of funding will go to salaries of specified staff at KRESA whose job responsibilities associated with this plan are clearly articulated. The one place that seems to be shortchanged is the lack of any money being shared with the LEAs, beyond supporting the teachers during their training and any meeting costs at the districts and schools. Finally, there is a requirement to provide a rationale for the funding. There is no text justifying the budget. By way of example, most of the funding will support 28 staff members at KRESA (24 professionals and 4 administrative assistants). The budget does offer a brief job description for each of the categories of staff. But those only tell the reader what these people will be doing; they do not offer an rationale for why they should be part of the organization in the first place. Thus, this section of the grant proposal has been given a middle range score of 6.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The KRESA plan makes the important point that the key to sustainability is the building of capacity that will address system supports and infrastructure. While the capacity building component is necessary for high fidelity of implementation across all schools during the grant period, the text explanation makes it difficult to assess whether it will be sufficient to keep districts, schools, and staff functioning at a high level beyond the funding? This reviewer does not believe that sufficient evidence was provided that KRESA would continue to provide the ongoing support these small districts will need to continue their development with these program skills and processes beyond the original grant funding cycle.</p> <p>An advantage that Michigan LEAs have, over districts in most other states, is the commitment of the state - both financially and with human resources - to the Multi-Tiered System Support program (MTSS). The implication is that this model will continue to expand and be supported. While KRESA is a central player in this process, what is missing from the answer to this criterion is any direct commitment to the nine consortium LEAs from KRESA as they continue to work on College Pathways PreK-3 beyond the funding cycle.</p> <p>These are important stumbling blocks for the sustainability of reforms in these nine LEAs. Thus, the score for this response was only in the low end of the middle range (4 out of 10).</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: This application failed to include this section of the proposal (Section X). Thus, 0 points were awarded.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The proposal rarely even uses the term "personalized learning environments." By way of illustration, a search of the word "personalize" found only 18 entries in the applicaiton and twothirds of those were in the Department of Education's selction criteria rather than in the actual applicant text. Of the six citations in the applicant response, three of them appears very early in the vision section. In other words, the plan reads like a collection of refrom ideas that might fit the desires of the applicant but not be responsive to the intent of the absolute priority of the RTT-D initiative. Neither is there much discussion of individualizing learning or deepening learning experiences or any proximate synonym. Without even routinely using this kind of language, this reviewer found it particularly difficult to see how the applicant would coherently and comprehensively link their plans to any notion of personalization.

Total	210	110
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	14

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The evaluative criteria for the optional budget submission section asks for reviewers to pass judgments on three subcriteria. The three include: (a) a thoughtful rationale for the specific area or population that the applicant will address, (b) a high-quality plan for how the applicant will carry out activities that will be co-developed and implemented across two or more LEAs, and (c) whether the proposed budget will be adequate and reasonable to support the development and implementation of the planned activities. Each subcriterion was assigned one-third of the total number of points (i.e., five). This section evaluates the first of two optional budgets -- the implementation and enhancement of information systems.

(a) This plan calls for the development and implementation of a data system that will allow all local districts in Kalamazoo County (and hopefully more widely if it is successful) to share a wide range of data that currently are not easily shared from one central location. The larger proposal, as well as this optional budget, make a convincing case for the importance of quality data as a central part of the decision process when schools and districts self-monitor their work -- be it innovative activities or more routine functions. That is, districts can't make good judgments about what to change unless they have clear evidence regarding the strengths or weaknesses of their current actions. This plan puts front and center an innovative platform consolidating data, as well as both common instructional and assessment tools, to take advantage of the data platform. This rationale received maximum points - 5.

(b) The plan is organized around three goals that not only provide initial design of the ideas, but also well-thought out training for use and application of the data to be incorporated into the normal routines of local educators. The three goals include first building a data platform using the Ed-Fi repository. Second, the plan calls for the development and use of Implement Pinnacle Instruction (a new tool to gather and assess data by standards) for PreK-3 teachers and students -- a population of the districts that have not received widespread attention for these tools in the past. A particularly noteworthy part of this tool is the promised ability to assess hard to measure skills like goal-setting, teamwork, and perseverance. The third goal addresses

the need for accessible data to include report card information -- in this case an electronic standards based report card. This will add a helpful and accessible element to parent understanding of student progress. While the plan calls for implementation across all nine LEAs in the county, the proposal also asks that the applicant show evidence of co-development. It appears from the text that KRESA will be doing all the development work (through contractors) so while this section receives a high range score (4) it is not allocated a maximum score.

(c) The applicant offers a detailed budget that appears both reasonable and adequate. Approximately 60% of the budget would be for contractual activities with about half of that going for the training of teachers in the nine LEAs to use the tools and the other half mostly distributed between programming and licensing fees. Just over one-third of the rest of the budget would be spent on RESA personnel (including benefits) to coordinate this work. While the Department of Education offers no guidelines for the balance between RTT-D funding and other outside funding for these optional budgets, it is noted that only 22% of the total budget would derive from outside sources. With that low number it is unlikely that such an important activity will take place without RTT-D support. the level of detail regarding the budget warrants a maximum score of 5.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	14
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The evaluative criteria for the optional budget submission section asks for reviewers to pass judgments on three subcriteria. The three include: (a) a thoughtful rationale for the specific area or population that the applicant will address, (b) a high-quality plan for how the applicant will carry out activities that will be co-developed and implemented across two or more LEAs, and (c) whether the proposed budget will be adequate and reasonable to support the development and implementation of the planned activities. Each subcriterion was assigned one-third of the total number of points (i.e., five). This section evaluates the second of two optional budgets -- the expansion of a parent engagement program, Parents as Teachers, to reach all eligible 3 to 5 year olds in the county.

(a) This plan calls for the expansion of an already existing parent engagement program so that the current number of students reached would be quadrupled (from 400 to 1600). The plan makes a convincing case with the argument that students who come prepared for school will do much better once in school, and thus will have enhanced larger life opportunities. It is also true that those most accessible to prepare 3 to 5 year olds for school are parents. Yet,, those students (and parents) most in need of that kind of preparation are least likely to receive it in Kalamazoo County. This plan will put that skill in the hands of the most needy group of parents. This rationale received maximum points - 5.

(b) The plan has one goal -- to get more parents engaged and reach the entire eligible population of 1600 low-income families when currently only 400 are served. As important as that goal is, an ancillary outcome will be the development of a database on the students, their families and their learning experiences. This will be invaluable to schools, especially kindergarten teachers as they plan for the needs of their students. Using trained parents, this program Parents as Teachers (PAT), will establish a routine of home visits as a key strategy for educating parents on the value of school readiness. The proposal indicates that this model has evidence-based research to document its utility. While the plan calls for implementation across all nine LEAs in the county, the proposal also asks that the applicant show evidence of co-development regarding expansion of this program. There is no evidence in this section that KRESA will co-develop any of this with any of the local LEAs. Thus, while this section receives a high range score (4) it is not allocated a maximum score.

(c) The applicant offers a detailed budget that appears both reasonable and adequate. The budget is straight forward with almost all of the funding (90%) devoted to the personnel costs of training and employing 17 part-time home visitors (parents trained from the community) to make regular home visits as the primary tool for educating parents about the value of promoting education with their children. Approximately three-eighths of the total budget will come from other sources, so if this plan cannot be supported by this is some reasonable probability that this program can continue, albeit not reaching all the families that need it. The level of detail regarding the budget warrants a maximum score of 5.